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C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 006435

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/RA AND NEA/ELA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/22/2015

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SUBJECT: PRESSURING SYRIA TO NORMALIZE THE SYRIAN-LEBANESE BORDER

REF: STATE 151378 (NOTAL)

Classified by Acting ECPO Chief Jerry Mallory for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

(C) Poloff delivered reftel demarche on August 22 to MFA Cabinet staff member Alaa Hadidi, stressing the importance of continued GOE pressure on Damascus to end its economic harassment of Lebanon and to follow through on implementation of UNSCR 1559. Hadidi, who was handling the Syria/Lebanon file for one of his vacationing colleagues, promised to convey the talking points (left with Hadidi in the form of an aide-memoire) to the Minister and others within the GOE bureaucracy. As for the substance of the demarche itself, Hadidi offered little regarding GOE relations with either Damascus or Beirut. He mentioned, however, that the upcoming September 6 meeting of Arab League ministers of foreign affairs would offer an opportunity to address such issues, most likely on the margins of the gathering. The foreign ministers of both Syria and Lebanon are expected to attend the meeting, to take place one day before Egypt's presidential election.

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JONES